8th November, 2004, European Parliament have adopted regulation to establish common rules, which provide for compensation and assistance to air passengers in the event of denied boarding and cancellation or long delay of flights.

(c) All airlines operating to EU Member States including Air India are affected by the new regulations. All airlines have represented to European Economic Community (EEC) through International Air Transport Association (IATA) in this regard.

(d) As per the information paper circulated by EU, reasons for delay of flights are not relevant. If the delay is up to 5 hours, passengers are to be provided meals, refreshment, hotel accommodation and transport between the airport and the place of accommodation. If the delay is more than 5 hours, the cost of the ticket will have to be reimbursed.

Fire Accident at Bangalore Airport

10. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the flights at Bangalore airport were disrupted following a fire which broke out at the Airport Terminal building on the 2nd February, 2005;

(b) if so, the causes for the fire accident;

(c) the action taken by the Airports Authority of India in this regard so far; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to avert such fire accidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL); (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The incident was caused due to Electrical Short Circuit.

(c) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has advised the licensee running the restaurant where the fire broke out, to install fire detection system and protection measures as per National Building Code and also to provide training to all staff in the first-aid, fire fighting and evacuation, to repair the premises and to obtain necessary certification from fire and electrical departments before commissioning of kitchen services.

(d) AAi has proposed to bring all buildings at the airports under the National Building Code fire protection measures. All Airport In-charges have also been advised to strictly enforce the terms and conditions of the Licence Agreement and also to carry out periodic inspection of the premises as per the Agreement.

Encroachment near Airports

†11. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether many a habitation located illegally on encroached land near several airports in the country are creating a lot of problems for air traffic;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps Government are going to take with regard to above habitations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Encroachments are causing problems for air traffic at various airports such as Kota, Lucknow, Mumbai, Rajkot, Malda, Hyderabad and Guwahati.

(c) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has approached the concerned State Governments to remove the encroachers. In Malda a case has been filed in the Court for eviction. In Guwahati also eviction proceedings have been initiated. Some hutments have recently been cleared at Juhu Airport at Mumbai. In 2003, amendment of AAI Act of 1994 was carried to provide for setting up of Tribunals to expedite cases relating to encroachment.

Induction of SARAS Aircraft

12. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) how long it will take for SARAS (14 seats indigenous) aircraft to take to its wings on regular passenger flight; and

(b) whether the earlier test flight on August 22,2004, was successful,

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.